



Town of Groton, Connecticut

Meeting Agenda

45 Fort Hill Road
Groton, CT 06340-4394
Town Clerk 860-441-6640
Town Manager 860-441-6630

Representative Town Meeting

Moderator Kevin Power, Representatives Jean-Claude Ambroise, Joe Baril, Nancy E. Barnhart, Peter J. Bartinik, Jr., Alicia Bauer, Nancy E. Beckwith, Christopher J. Burns, Michael Collins, Nancy M. Congdon, Warren T. Cooper, Syma Ebbin, Peter Fairbank, Nancy E. Gilly, Patrice Granatosky, Dolores Harrell, Keith L. Hedrick, Damon Q. Helme, Lynn Crockett Hubbard, Michael Dean Johnson, Rosanne E. Kotowski, Elizabeth Luck, Jackie Massett, Carole McCarthy, Karen F. Morton, Scott Newsome, Dana C. Parfitt, Richard J. Pasqualini, Jr., Kristen L. Powers, Don Pratt, Betty A. Prochaska, Sandry Ramos-Morales, John F. Scott IV, Jack Sebastian, Dana S. Semeraro, Jennifer Smuts, Joan Steinfeld, Irma Streeter, Mark Svencer, Archie C. Swindell, and Robert A. Warn

Wednesday, April 21, 2010

7:30 PM

Town Hall Annex-Community Room 1

Regular Meeting

- A. ROLL CALL
- B. MOMENT OF SILENCE AND SALUTE TO THE FLAG
- C. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF FEBRUARY 17, 2010
- D. CITIZENS' PETITIONS

This is the portion of the RTM agenda where the RTM welcomes comments from citizens. Each presentation should be limited to ten minutes or less, and citizens should, if possible, submit written comments. Presentations should be limited to matters pertinent to Groton. The Moderator, or members through the Moderator, shall ask questions only in order to clarify the speaker's presentation. Responses may be given by the Moderator and/or by the Town Manager. Citizens should make their presentations from the lectern and state their names and addresses for the record.

- E. RECEPTION OF COMMUNICATIONS
- F. REPORT OF THE TOWN MANAGER:

- 1. Financial report
- 2. Monthly briefing

- G. LIAISON REPORTS

- H. COMMITTEE REPORTS

- 1. FINANCE

- a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Bartinik

- 2. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & SERVICES

- a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Pratt

- 3. EDUCATION

- a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Swindell

- 4. RECREATION

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Warn

5. PUBLIC SAFETY

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Parfitt

6. PUBLIC WORKS

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Collins

7. RULES & PROCEDURES

a. Chairman's notes on the business of the Town - Chairman Scott

2010-0027 Possible Changes to 2010 RTM Meeting Schedule

POSSIBLE CHANGES TO 2010 RTM MEETING SCHEDULE

Legislative History

1/20/2010 Representative Town Meeting Referred Representative Town Meeting

Rep. Beckwith requested a referral to discuss changing the location and dates of the RTM 2010 regular meeting schedule when the renovations of the Senior Center are completed.

Moderator Power acknowledged that this will appear on the February agenda.

2/17/2010 Representative Town Meeting Referred RTM Rules & Procedures Commi

Rep. Collins supports changing the meeting date to the second Wednesday of the month.

Rep. Smuts is in favor of the current schedule and location. She stated that the annex is permanently outfitted with the necessary video equipment.

Rep. Streeter agrees with Rep. Collins and prefers relocating to the newly-renovated Senior Center. She feels there is not enough room at the annex.

Reps. Beckwith, Bauer and Granatosky agree with Reps. Collins and Streeter.

Rep. Cooper feels the RTM should delay any decision to allow members time to tour the renovated Senior Center before deciding.

In response to Rep. Pasqualini, the Town Clerk confirmed there is an additional cost for a building monitor at the Senior Center for each meeting.

The Town Manager stated he can provide the cost for the building monitor. He recommends that any decision to relocate to the Senior Center be delayed until after the Senior Center has officially reopened. He suggested that additional tables can be provided at the next meeting to provide members more space.

Rep. Steinfeld questioned whether the Annex could be made available to the RTM on the second Wednesday of the month.

In response to Rep. Beckwith, the Moderator referred this item to the RTM Rules and Procedures. Rep. Beckwith requested that the committee evaluate the discussion at this meeting and investigate changing the RTM meeting date to the second Wednesday of the month and relocating the meeting to the new Senior Center.

3/17/2010 RTM Rules & Procedures Discussed
Committee

I. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Overview of Budget Procedures

2009-0190 Preliminary RTM Budget Discussion

PRELIMINARY BUDGET DISCUSSION FOR RTM'S FY2011 BUDGET PROCESS

Legislative History

11/18/2009 Representative Town Meeting Discussed

Rep. Sebastian reviewed a spreadsheet that he prepared and provided to all members in their monthly packets. The memo addresses the grand levy over the last ten years. He noted that he based his spreadsheet on figures provided by the Finance Director. He feels that the RTM is responsible for the Grand Levy because the RTM approves the Town spending each year. He commented that the RTM is the last defense for holding the line against budget and tax increases. He stated that he has received comments from residents who are concerned about the increase in taxes each year, especially individuals on fixed incomes. He suggested that the RTM needs to discuss now what next year's budget bottom line should be at the end of the 2010 budget deliberations.

Rep. Massett stated that every year there are requests for no tax increase. She clarified that past and current Town Managers have asked the RTM to suggest what services should be reduced or eliminated. She feels the RTM needs to think about making those type of suggestions to the Manager.

Rep. Smuts agreed with Rep. Sebastian. She noted that in addition to debt service, there are other items that the RTM has no control over, such as contracts and salaries. She feels the RTM needs to have a list of items or services which are within its control to help identify the items that the public is willing to have reduced or eliminated. She cited as possible examples a reduction in the library hours, or in police response time. She feels there are many things in the budget that citizens enjoy but that it is the job of the RTM to make the difficult decisions that result in reduced or eliminated services.

Rep. Ebbin stated that she read in the newspaper about the recent BOE teacher contract negotiations that included no wage increase for 2010. She commented that since the RTM has no involvement with contract negotiations for Town employees, the Council should follow this direction with Town employee contracts. She feels it is important to be equitable with teachers and Town employees. She does not want the teachers to be the only ones penalized by the current economic situation.

Rep. Cooper agreed with Rep. Sebastian and stated for the record that he does not want an increase in the budget this year.

The Town Manager responded to Rep. Sebastian's remarks concerning the grand levy, debt service and inflation levels. He stated that many factors have influenced the budget over the last ten years. He mentioned that the phase-in of the last revaluation adversely affected many residents and benefited others, and that the decrease in revenues from outside sources has increased dependency on local property tax. These issues have a far greater influence on the increase in taxes than the growth of the budget. He feels it is essential to identify the services that are important for the Town, since traditional revenue sources are no longer keeping pace or are being eliminated. He noted that in the past he has presented a reduced or level budget, and that the Council or RTM has added money back for services they did not want eliminated.

Rep. Peruzzotti commented that she was impressed with the reorganization and reduction to the library's budget last year. She feels that all Department Heads should be encouraged to make similar changes this year.

In response to Rep. Sebastian, the Town Manager distributed a spreadsheet comparing changes in the Consumer Price Index to changes in the adopted budget minus debt service over the past ten years. He responded to Rep. Peruzzotti that the library situation was a unique opportunity to reorganize and make changes to operations. He noted that every vacant position is scrutinized and the affected department is reviewed to see if changes, reorganization, or elimination of the position is possible. He confirmed that no job is automatically filled. He stated that he does not foresee a large number of retirements this budget year, nor does he anticipate an opportunity for reorganization similar to that at the library. He mentioned that Rep. Sebastian is suggesting a 0% tax levy budget for 2010 which would significantly affect the Town and most likely cause layoffs which most members do not support.

12/16/2009 Representative Town Meeting Discussed

Rep. Sebastian observed that the RTM approves expenditures and has no input on the income to the Town. He feels that it would not be unreasonable if the RTM had consensus to recommend a zero tax increase. He stated that many residents will not receive Social Security increases and that Medicare costs are increasing. He suggested that the Town Manager and Superintendent provide the lowest estimate possible for State and Federal Revenue and propose a budget that does not raise taxes.

1/20/2010 Representative Town Meeting Discussed

Rep. Ambrose stated his concerns on the long-term situation of declining revenue sources. He reminded members of the anticipated loss of federal stimulus funds in the near future and how it will impact the budget. He feels the RTM needs to address how to sustain the budget. He suggested that members need to anticipate future budget shortfalls to avoid large increases and start making adjustments now.

2/17/2010 Representative Town Meeting Discussed

Rep. Sebastian requested that property taxes not be increased since many residents are being affected by the current economic crisis. He stated that the Town cannot rely on corporate taxes from Pfizer and Electric Boat forever. He suggested that a budget figure be provided for each account that would not increase taxes.

In response to Rep. Steinfeld, the Moderator stated that there is not enough time to require department heads to explain their requested budgets prior to the RTM annual consideration of the budget.

Rep. Pasqualini feels that the committees need to discuss and scrutinize the accounts assigned to them. He noted that reductions should be made with a scalpel and not with an axe by asking department heads where reductions would be made. He believes that members need to trust the committees to carefully examine the accounts and make their recommendations to the entire RTM during budget deliberations.

The Moderator urged members to be mindful of RTM rule 8.5 Decorum in Debate as the budget sessions are approaching. He specifically cautioned all members that the rule states that "remarks are to be addressed to the Moderator or Committee Chair and shall maintain a courteous tone. Members shall avoid personal affronts and/or accusations of improper motives."

J. ADJOURNMENT